

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MOGADISCIO 0991

LIMDIS

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SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO BERBERA: REVIEW AND FINAL QUESTIONS

REF: MOGADISCIO 0972

1. THERE ARE STILL NUMBER OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS REGARDING CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO BERBERA JULY 4 AND JULY 6 RESPECTIVELY. REPORTS SUBMITTED BY SENATE AND HOUSE DELEGATIONS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONFIRM KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE TO US ABOUT BERBERA AND GIVEN IN DIEGO GARCIA TESTIMONY. WHAT THOSE REPORTS MAY NOT RPT NOT CLARIFY IS SIAD'S IMMEDIATE PURPOSE, HIS TACTICS AND HIS ULTIMATE GOALS IN INVITING AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN TO BERBERA. FOLLOWING IS AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER SOME OF THOSE QUESTIONS BASED UPON LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US. QUESTIONS INCLUDE ALSO SOVIET ROLE AND DIFFERENCE IN RECEPTION GIVEN SENATOR BARTLETT AS COMPARED WITH CONGRESSMAN STRATTON AT BERBERA.

2. SIAD'S PURPOSE IN EXTENDING INVITATION TO AMERICAN SENATORS AND CONGRESEMEN WAS TO SHOW WORLD -- INCLUDING AMERICAN LEGISLATORS -- THAT HE HAD NOTHING TO HIDE AT BERBERA AND THAT US BASE ALLEGATIONS WERE FALSE. HE ALSO WISHED TO INTEREST US CONGRESS IN SOMALIA'S REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS WITH HOPE OF WINNING HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT WHICH WOULD DISPLACE MORE RECENT

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US OBSESSION WITH SOVIET BASE ISSUE. SIAD MADE THIS POINT SPECIF-

ICALLY IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH SENATOR BARTLETT (MOG 953) WHEN HE SAID THAT TRUE PURPOSE OF HIS INVITATION WAS TO GIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF SOMALIA'S VERY REAL HUMAN PROBLEMS.

3. SIAD REINFORCED HIS APPEAL BY TELLING SENATOR BARTLETT THAT, ALTHOUGH HE HAD GRANTED FACILITIES AT BERBERA TO SOVIET UNION, HE WOULD GRANT FACILITIES TO US NAVY AS WELL AND HAD BEEN PREPARED TO RECEIVE US NAVY SHIP VISIT IN SOMALIA FOLLOWING HIS OCTOBER, 1974 TALK WITH PRESIDENT FORD. WE LEAVE MOOT QUESTION OF WHETHER SIAD BELIEVES THAT US AND SOVIET NAVIES COULD SHARE BERBERA FACILITIES AT SOME FUTURE DATE. SIAD'S POINT NEVERTHELESS WAS THAT IN RETURN FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT, HE WAS PREPARED TO TAKE MORE DECISIVE MEASURE ON BEHALF OF U.S.

4. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH BOTH SENATOR BARTLETT AND CONGRESSMAN STRATTON, SIAD URGED BOTH GROUPS TO DELAY THEIR RETURN TO US AND VISIT DROUGHT AND RESETTLEMENT AREAS, WHERE TRUE PICTURE OF SOMALIA'S ENORMOUS PROBLEMS WOULD EMERGE. BOTH GROUPS VISITED RESETTLEMENT CAMPS AND WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED.

5. SIAD'S TACTICS AT BERBERA: AS IT TURNED OUT, GROUNDWORK FOR CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO BERBERA HAD BEEN PREPARED BY SIAD IN HIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND OTHERS EARLIER IN 1974 AND 75. WHEN HE ADMITTED THAT HE HAD GRANTED RUSSIANS FACILITIES AT BERBERA. SIAD ACKNOWLEDGED HIS CONCESSIONS TO RUSSIANS AGAIN WITH SENATOR BARTLETT AND WITH STRATTON, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT RPT NOT IDENTIFY EXACT NATURE OF FACILITIES. (HE ALSO USED SAME LINE WITH AMERICAN JOURNALISTS FROM NY TIMES. WASHINGTON POST AND US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT DURING LENGTHY INTERVIEW ON JULY 3.)

6. DURING SENATOR BARTLETT'S JULY 4 VISIT TO BERBERA, COLONEL SULEIMAN IDENTIFIED SOVIET LAND FACILITIES (I.E., TRANSMITTER STATION AND RECEIVER SITE) WHICH SENATOR AND HIS GROUP COULD NOT RPT NOT ENTER. ALTHOUGH ACCOMPANYING AMERICAN JOURNALISTS IMMEDIATELY CLAIMED THAT SULEIMAN'S ADMISSION CONTRADICTED SIAD CLAIM THAT HE HAD NOT RPT NOT SURRENDERED INCH OF SOMALI SOIL TO FOREIGN OCCUPATION, SOMALIS OBVIOUSLY FELT THAT GRANTING SOVIETS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES COULD NOT RPT NOT BE SERIOUSLY SUSTAINED IN MEDIA AS

SIGNIFICANT FORFEITURE OF SOMALI SOVEREIGNTY. SULEIMAN ALSO
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ADMITTED THAT BARRACKS SHIP WAS A SOVIET VESSEL, WHICH WAS EVIDENT IN ANY CASE FROM RUSSIAN GUARD AND SOVIET ENSIGNS.

7. SAME TACTICS, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT RPT NOT WORK WITH MISSILE HANDLING AND STORAGE FACILITY, SINCE SOMALI ADMISSION THAT SOVIET UNION CONTROLLED INSTALLATION WOULD SUBSTANTIATE US CHARGES THAT

SOVIETS WERE CONSTRUCTING SOVIET MISSILE FACILITY FOR THEIR USE AT BERBERA. INSTEAD, SULEIMAN OPENED FACILITY TO SENATOR BARTLETT AND HIS GROUP. - STYX MISSILE CRATE WAS OPEN TO VIEW AND DURING TOUR SULEIMAN ADMITTED THAT SOMALI NAVY DID POSSESS STYX MISSILE, ALTHOUGH IT LACKED BOATS TO USE THEM, AND NOTED THAT THIS WAS MOST CLOSELY GUARDED MILITARY SECRET IN SOMALI INVENTORY. (SULEIMAN ALSO USED SAME LINE WITH BARTLETT TO JUSTIFY DENIAL OF FULL ENTRY TO FACILITY TO WESTERN JOURNALISTS ON JUNE 28 CLAIMING THAT NEWSMEN INCLUDED KENYAN, FRENCH AND OTHER JOURNALISTS WHO WERE SOMALIA'S ENEMIES. WHAT WAS NOT RPT NOT APPARENT TO SULEIMAN, BUT WAS TO ACCOMPANYING US TECHNICIANS, WAS FACT THAT FACILITY'S SIZE COULD HANDLE VIRTUALLY ANY MISSILE IN SOVIET INVENTORY AND WAS FAR LARGER THAN STYX SERVICTNG WOULD REQUIRE.

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8. AT CONCLUSION OF SENATOR BARTLETT'S TOUR, US TEAM HAD THUS OBTAINED SOMALI ADMISSION THAT TWO LAND INSTALLATIONS AT BERBERA WERE UNDER SOVIET CONTROL, THAT SOVIET BARRACKS SHIP WAS IN PORT, SOVIET TECHNICIANS IN TRAILER AND BARRACKS AREA, AND THAT SOMALI NAVY POSSESSED STYX MISSILE. THESE CONCESSIONS REFINED US KNOWLEDGE OF HOW SOMALI GOVT VIEWED BERBERA FACILITIES BUT DID NOT ADD ANY SIGNIFICANT NEW DIMENSION TO SOVIET BASE ISSUE.

9. SOVIET ROLE: WE ASSUME THAT SENATOR BARTLETT'S JULY 4 TRIP TO BERBERA TOOK PLACE WITH SOVIET CONSENT, HOWEVER GRUDGING, AND THAT BROADER ASPECTS OF SENATOR'S ITINERARY ARRANGED IN SUCH A WAY THAT NOTHING WOULD BE DISCOVERED WHICH SOMALIS DID NOT RPT NOT INTEND TO BE SEEN, ACKNOWLEDGED OR IDENTIFIED. GIVEN SOVIET OBSESSION WITH

SECRECY, WE HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY RATIONALIZING SOVIET CONSENT TO SIAD'S ORIGINAL INVITATION TO US ENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN. WE SUSPECT THAT IF SOVIET ADVISORS COULD HAVE RULED ON VISITING AMERICANS' ACCESS TO MISSILE HANDLING FACILITY, THEY WOULD HAVE TOTALLY BARRED ENTRANCE TO VISITORS WITH DISCLAIMER THAT FACILITY WAS SOMALI DEFENSE INSTALLATION.

10. SIAD'S CHOICE OF AHMED SULEIMAN TO ESCORT SENATOR BARTLETT SUGGESTS HE EXPECTED SOVIET RESISTANCE AT BERBERA. IT SHOWS HE WAS DETERMINED TO HONOR HIS PLEDGE TO THE SENATOR ON JULY 3 THAT HE WOULD SEE ALL HE WANTED TO SEE. SULEIMAN'S PRESENCE, AS SIAD'S ALTER EGO AND HEAD OF NSS, MEANT THAT SIAD'S DETERMINATION COULD NOT RPT NOT BE FRUSTRATED BY SOMALI NAVAL OFFICERS OR OTHERS UNDER SECRET

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SOVIET INFLUENCE.

11. SIAD'S WILLINGNESS TO OPEN UP MISSILE HANDLING FACILITY TO AMERICAN SENATOR AND FOUR OF HIS TECHNICIANS RAISES QUESTION ABOUT SIAD'S PRECISE KNOWLEDGE OF CAPABILITY OF MISSILE HANDLING INSTALLATION WHICH IS MORE DIFFICULT TO ANSWER. ON ASSUMPTION THAT SOVIET ADVISORS WOULD HAVE TOTALLY OPPOSED ANY INSPECTION WHICH MIGHT HAVE INCREASED US INTELLIGENCE LORE REGARDING SOVIET MISSILE HANDLING CAPABILITY, WE CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT SIAD OVERRULED THEIR OPPOSITION, AND THAT HIS ABILITY TO DO SO SUGGESTS THAT HE RETAINS CONSIDERABLE INDEPENDENCE WITH REGARD TO HIS SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS. IT MIGHT ALSO MEAN THAT HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE BERBERA MISSILE FACILITY MAY BE UNIQUELY CONFINED TO ITS UTILITY FOR STYX MISSILES. RE COMPLEMENTARY: IF SIAD HIMSELF HAD AGREED TO SOVIET MISSILE FACILITIES AT BERBERA FOR SOVIET FLEET PURPOSES RATHER THAN SOMALI DEFENSE NEEDS, THEN BY SAME TOKEN WE WOULD ASSUME THAT NATURE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH MOSCOW WAS SUCH THAT HE HAD ALSO FORFEITED TO SOVIETS MUCH OF HIS FREEDOM OF DECISION IN BERBERA MATTERS. IN LATTER CASE, SIAD WOULD HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO COUNTER US SOVIET BASE CHARGES BY INVITING SYMPATHETIC FOREIGN NEWSMEN, NOT RPT NOT THE AMERICAN CONGRESS. BUT THESE CONCLUSIONS ARE ALSO SPECULATIVE. ONLY ADDITIONAL LIGHT WE CAN SHED ON THESE QUESTIONS IS SHIKT IN SOMALI TACTICS FOLLOWING VISIT OF BARTLETT GROUP JULY 4 AND CONGRESSMAN STRATTON'S TOUR ON JULY 6.

12. ON JULY 3, PRESIDENT SIAD TOLD SENATOR BARTLETT THAT HE WAS AWARE THAT CONGRESSMEN WOULD BRING US INTELLIGENCE EXPERTS TO BERBERA TO SHARE THEIR OBSERVATIONS AND THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT OBJECT TO THAT. SIAD WAS THUS PREPARED FOR US INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS AND THIS EXPECTATION MAY HAVE CONVINCED HIM THAT SOMALI GOVT COULD NOT RPT NOT HOPE TO HIDE POSSESSION OF STYX FROM OBSERVERS.

13. BETWEEN JULY 4 AND JULY 6, HOWEVER, SOMALI GOVT ABRUPTLY CHANGED TACTICS WITH US CONGRESSIONAL TEAM. STRATTON AND HIS GROUP WERE NOT RPT NOT PERMITTED ADVANTAGES GIVEN SENATOR BARTLETT AND

TECHNICAL OBSERVERS WERE NOT RPT NOT PERMITTED ACCESS WITH CONGRESSMEN TO MISSILE FACILITY. THEY OBSERVED MUCH LESS THAN BARTLETT GROUP.

14. SOMALI OFFICIALS HAVE EXPLAINED DIFFERENCE IN ACCESS IN TERMS OF PERSONALITIES INVOLVED. BOTH AHMED MOHAMED MOHAMUD, WHO WAS
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SPOKESMAN FOR GSDR DURING STRATTON TOUR, AND AMBASSADOR SAMANTAR HAVE TOLD ME PRIVATELY THAT SENATOR BARTLETT WAS FIRM BUT UNDERSTANDING, WHILE STRATTON TEAM WAS RUDE AND AGGRESSIVE. SOMALI EXPLANATION IS BLATANTLY SELF-SERVING, SINCE IT WAS APPARENT FROM TIME STRATTON GROUP ARRIVED IN HARGEISA JULY 6 THAT THEY WOULD HAVE LESS TIME ON GROUND AT BERBERA THAN BARTLETT TEAM. THEY HAD NO RPT NO HELICOPTER TRANSPORT FROM HARGEISA. UPON ARRIVAL IN BERBERA, STRATTON TEAM WAS NOT GIVEN ACCESS ON FOOT TO BARRACKS AND TRAILER AREA, TO MISSILE FACILITY OR TO AREA ADJACENT TO COMMUNICATIONS SITES.

15. REASON FOR SWITCH IN TACTICS WAS THAT AS RESULT OF BARTLETT TOUR, SOMALI HOSTS WERE UNDER FIRM INSTRUCTIONS TO KEEP AMERICAN OBSERVERS ON MUCH TIGHTER LEASH THAN SENATOR BARTLETT'S GROUP. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT CHANGE IN TACTICS WAS FORCED UPON SOMALIS BY SOVIETS, WHO COMPLAINED TO SIAD THAT AMERICAN OBSERVERS HAD INTRUDED INTO INSTALLATIONS AT BERBERA AND GSDR RISKED SERIOUS INCIDENT IF REPETITION OF JULY 4 INCIDENTS OCCURRED, WHEN US TECHNICIAN BARGED INTO TRAILER AND SURPRISED SOVIET EMERGING FROM SHOWER. SOMALI CONCERN AT THREAT OF US/USSR INCIDENT ON SOMALI SOIL WAS IMPLICIT IN REMARKS MADE TO ME BY AHMED MOHAMED ON EVENING OF JULY 6, FOLLOWING RETURN OF STRATTON GROUP, BY AMBASSADOR SAMANTAR ON SAME NIGHT, AND BY NSS CHIEF AHMED SULEIMAN IN CONVERSATION ON JULY 8. SOMALI NAVY COMMANDER MADE SIMILAR REMARK TO US OBSERVER ON BERBERA MOLE ON JULY 6.

16. IF SOVIETS WARNED SIAD THAT HE WAS RISKING SERIOUS INCIDENT IF HE PERMITTED US OBSERVERS SAME FREEDOM THEY OBTAINED UNDER SULEIMAN, IT IS LIKELY ALSO THAT SOVIETS WERE CONCERNED AT US TECHNICAL EXPERTISE WHICH HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AT WORK WITH BARTLETT GROUP.

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17. AMERICAN JOURNALISTS WHO ACCOMPANIED BARTLETT TEAM TO BERBERA ON JULY 4 WERE ENORMOUSLY IMPRESSED BY TECHNICAL SKILLS OF SENATOR BARTLETT'S STAFF. ON BASIS OF THEIR INITIAL OBSERVATIONS OF SAME STAFF ON PLANE TO HARGEISA AND DURING TRIP TO BERBERA, AMERICAN

NEWSMEN HAD CONCLUDED THAT AMERICAN TECHNICIANS, ATTIRE FOR A HOLIDAY OUTING IN SUN GEAR, GOLF CAPS AND UMBRELLAS, ETC., WOULD BE OUTMANEUVERED BY SOMALI HOSTS, AS JUNE 28 JOURNALISTS HAD BEEN, AND WOULD RETURN TO MOGADISCIO WITH ONLY DIMMEST RECOLLECTION OF WHAT THEY HAD SEEN. THEIR SKEPTICISM WAS INCREASED UPON ARRIVAL AT BERBERA, WHEN TEAM PHOTOGRAPHER ATTEMPTED TO TAKE PHOTO OF AREA, TRIPPED OVER CONSPICUOUS GROUND PIPE, AND FELL ON HIS FACE. THEY ANTICIPATED SIMILAR COMEDY OF ERRORS AS JOURNEY CONTINUED. (LOW COMIC RELIEF BEGAN ON HARGEISA PLANE WHEN AMERICAN JOURNALIST PASSED ROLLED-UP COPY OF NEWSWEEK TO GROUP MEMBER WHO HAD IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS LIBRARY OF CONGRESS EMPLOYEE WITH COMMENT THAT NEWSMEN HAD MESSAGE FOR HIM. TECHNICIAN UNROLLED JUNE 23 NEWSWEEK ISSUE TO FIND HIMSELF EYEBALLED BY NEWSWEEK COVER WITH CAPTION: QTE CIA: WHO'S WATCHING WHOM? UNQUOTE.)

18. THEY WERE SERIOUSLY MISTAKEN. THEY LISTENED IN AMAZEMENT AS BARTLETT'S FOOTLOOSE TECHNICIANS DEPLOYED AT POL FACILITY AND BEGAN TO READ TECHNICAL FEATURES OF BARREN BERBERA LANDSCAPE FROM DETAILS WHOSE MEATING WAS HIDDEN TO NEWSMEN AND TO SOMALI HOSTS. SOMALIS WERE UNABLE TO REIN THEM IN. MOST IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE
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WAS GIVEN AT TRANSMITTER SITE WHERE BARTLETT'S EXPERT, EQUIPPED ONLY WITH BINOCULARS, BEGAN TO IDENTIFY ALOUD SOVIET COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT ON BASIS OF ANTENNA FIELDS AND GROUND DETAILS. AT THIS POINT, SOMALI NAVAL COMMANDER, WHO WAS SHAKEN BY PERFORMANCE, ATTEMPTED TO INDUCE SULEIMAN TO PUT END TO INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

EFFORT. SULEIMAN SIMPLY WAVED HIM AWAY.

19. WHETHER SOVIETS WERE MORE CONCERNED AT US EXPERTISE OR ENERGY OF AMERICAN TECHNICIANS, SOMALI GOVT MADE SERIOUS AND SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO CONTROL CONGRESSMAN STRATTON'S GROUP. WE FIND IT INTERESTING THAT SOVIETS APPARENTLY COMPELLED TO USE THREAT OF US/SOVIET ALTERCATION AT BERBERA TO BRING SIAD BACK INTO LINE -- A PLOY WHICH BETRAYS THE CHARACTER OF SOVIET EXPERTISE IN SOMALIA. FROM THIS, IT IS NOT RPT NOT UNREASONABLE TO CONCLUDE THAT SOVIET MILITARY EXPERTS ABILITY TO MOVE SIAD DEPENDS MORE UPON THREAT AND BLUFF THAN CANDOR.

20. POLITICAL CONCLUSIONS WE CAN DRAW AS RESULT OF CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO BERBERA ARE TENTATIVE AND INCOMPLETE. WHILE SIAD'S WILLINGNESS TO SHOW SENATOR BARTLETT HIS BERBERA MISSILE FACILITY SUGGEST SIAD MAY HAVE BEEN UNAWARE OF ITS REAL NATURE (I.E., ITS ADVANTAGES FOR SOVIET FLEET USE), THAT TOO IS INCONCLUSIVE. YET FACT REMAINS THAT (A) SIAD HAS GONE TO EXTRAORDINARY LENGTHS TO CONVINCE AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN AND OBSERVERS THAT SOVIET BASE ALLEGATIONS FALSE; AND (B) SOVIET ADVISORS IN SOMALIA EVIDENTLY RESISTED OPENNESS OF SIAD INVITATION. THIS SHOULD TELL US THAT WE SHOULD NOT RPT NOT YET TAKE FOR GRANTED SIAD'S COLLUSION WITH SOVIETS IN MILITARY MATTERS, OR SOVIET UNION'S COMPLETE CANDOR WITH SIAD IN ITS OWN AMBITIONS IN SOMALIA. BOTH QUESTIONS HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR US OPTIONS IN SOMALIA.
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